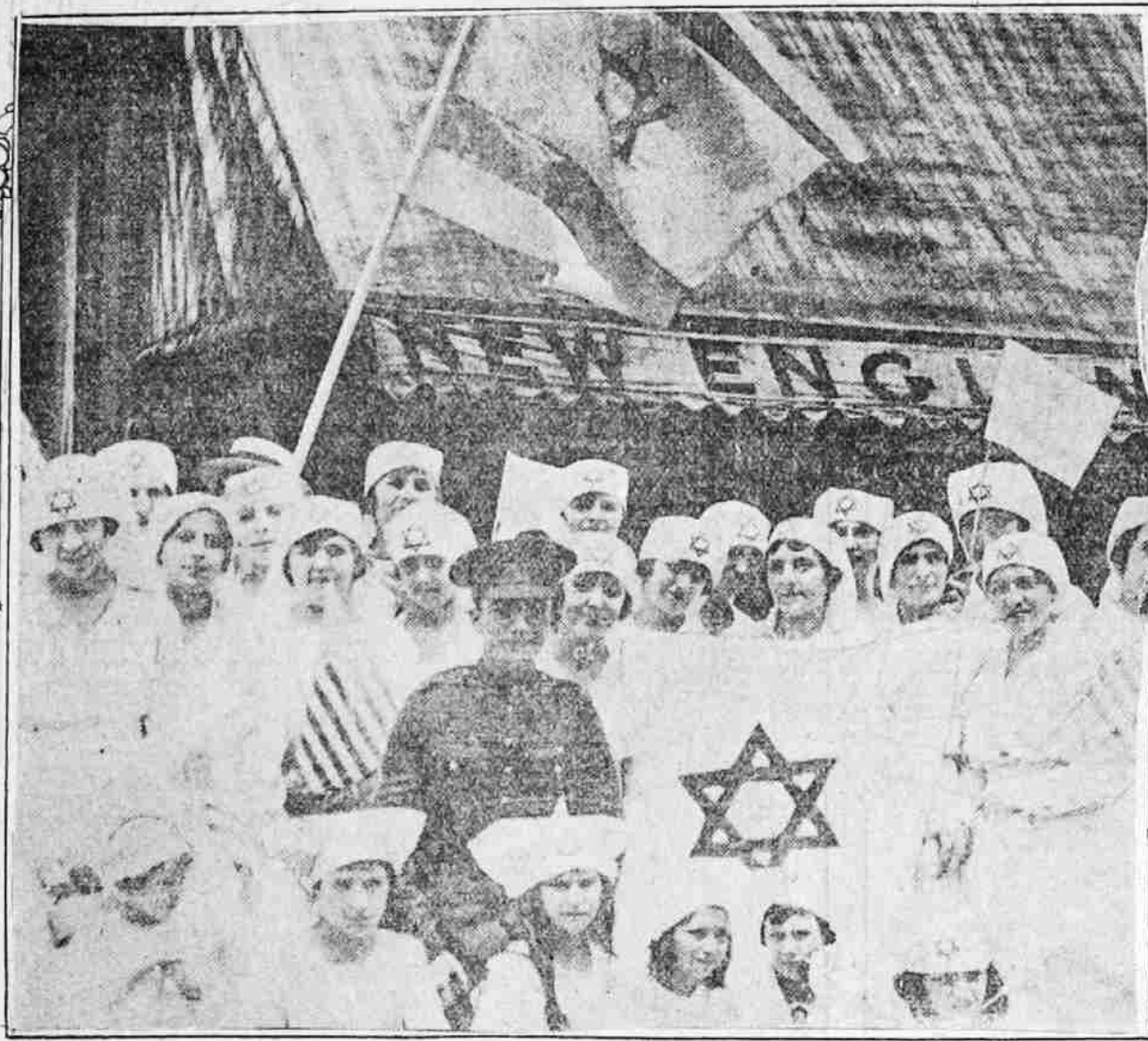


# Jews of U.S. Organizing Legion to Reclaim Palestine



PRETTY ST. LOUIS GIRLS HELP IN RECRUITING—NOTE THE JEWISH FLAG.



SERG. BEN COHEN, IN CHARGE OF ST. LOUIS RECRUITING.



MEMBERS OF FIRST JEWISH COMPANY ALL YOUNG BUSINESS MEN.

BY FREDERICK J. MCINTOSH.

**T**HE Jews are going home. Upon the road their eyes have sought for 2000 years they're marching—these 1918 Maccabees—on their way to Zion. And over their heads, proudly carried, are their colors—the flag of that resurrected peoples, the Jewish Nation. And with voices uplifted to their Lord God of Israel they're singing their Judean song.

The Jews are marching back, armed warriors. Stranger things have come to pass within this world. The Jews have arisen to arms, the Jewish Legion they are called, this body of warriors, gathered from the corners of the earth, to which the seed of Palestine were made to scatter 2000 years ago. And they're fighting to regain what they considered their rightful own, their Holy Land. They're fighting to crush the enemy of the ages, the terrible Turk, and to put away forever his dominion of the land that is the heritage of the Jews.

They see the lights of Palestine, far in the distance. The road leads through rivers of blood and over it are cast the heavy shadow of death. But unafraid are these warriors, for the light that shines from that far-off place has already illumined their souls. They are filled with the thrill of battle. Cannons boom all about them. Bombs burst over their heads. Machine guns rattle in front of them. Through a rain of shot and fire and living hell they must go. But the Jews are going. For in their breast there has been planted a hope. A hope that has been all but dead 2000 years.

Thousands strong these warring sons of Israel are marching and fighting. By hundreds they have already laid down their lives. Thousands upon thousands strong will they continue to march and to fight. By hundreds upon hundreds will they lay down their lives. The Jews are in the world's war as a nation, the Jewish Nation. They will continue in the war until that which they believe rightfully belongs to them shall have been restored.

And then, like other peace-loving nations, the Jews will settle down at home. But that home will not be in Russia, nor in Poland, nor England, nor Italy, nor France, nor even in the glorious United States. It will be in Palestine, where once a Jewish Nation was born and where later a Jewish Nation was crushed.

## Dreams Will Come True.

No more marvelous, more wonderful thing could have ever been dreamed of in all history than this journey of the Jews back to Palestine.

The dreams, prophecies and plans of the Zionists will now come true," said Dr. M. Selnick, one of the twenty leaders of the Jews who were driven out of Palestine by the Turks three years ago. "A population of 5,000,000 can be sustained in Palestine. In ten years we could have a controlling population of Jews out of a total of 1,000,000 people. The fifty communities already started will be the nucleus for a great democracy."

Who are these Jews who would go into battle to fight for the land they call their own? Who would brave wounds and death upon the battlefield? Are they from Russia? No. From Poland? Yes. From France, too, they come, and from England and sunny Italy and from the United States. From many cities and centers and towns and hamlets they are coming, thousands strong. Coming are these Jews to be made into warriors.

St. Louis is among the centers from which they are going forward. But hark, oh, Jerusalem, and hear a joyful sound, the tread of Jewish warriors on their ancestral ground. They come from over all the earth: from every friendly ground; they come from good old U. S. A.—its city, hamlet, town.

"Arise, Israel, shoulder your arms!" The cry was taken up and carried along until it spread over all the nation. In St. Louis it was heard. And it was heeded by almost fifty young Jewish



DR. N. SLOUSCH OF PARIS WHO STARTED WORLD'S ZIONIST MOVEMENT.

business men who since have gone forth to training camps. And soon they will have gone over across the sea to fight in Palestine that once again it might be the home of the Jews. On no other front will these fighters be sent. They have been promised that.

The British Government, under which they are recruited, has promised it. So, out of the 2800 from the United States who have hearkened to the call to arms, are thus far numbered almost half a hundred from St. Louis. The will of Jewish patriotism has barely begun to burn. Soon it will be raging. And it will enfold the soul of many others whose mother tongue is Yiddish—others who go forth to do or die in soldier uniform.

Everywhere the call is resounding. Others have given over their business and have joined the Jewish colors. By the last of this year a division of 20,000 will be in the field from America, fighting alongside divisions that have been made up in France and England and Italy. As an army it will launch its weight into the conflict now waged in the Holy Land. And the blood of many Jews will color the soil there. Already many of the nationality have come down. They went wearing the uniforms of heroes, for they have proved to be good soldiers—fighters, daring soldiers.

Under British they are being recruited but not under English-spoken command will they serve. For their commands are in their own tongue, in Hebrew. The flag is Hebrew. The emblem they wear on their caps is Hebrew. In the fullest measure has England recognized that there is such a nation as the Jewish nation. The passports issued to them read that way. America recognizes this nation. France also. How much of the Jewish dream of many centuries has already been realized? "We are a nation," they cheerily whisper to each other. "Not a tribe, a race without a country and without identity." And if America should find cause to war against Turkey, the Jews of the Jewish nation will be organized under the Stars and Stripes, just as they are being organized under the flag of the British.

The call reached St. Louis in the last week of March. Four young men heard it. Soon others heard it. Within a month the first squad was organized and was leaving homes for a Canadian training camp. Those who first took

up the cry to arms were workers in the Zionist movement here. They were: Ben Cohen, Abraham Levin, M. B. Seligshon and Aaron J. Bashkow. The first meeting was participated in by eight persons. At this meeting it was decided to open a Jewish recruiting office. This office has since remained open at 1507 Franklin avenue. And through its door enters St. Louis' contribution to the great force that is headed towards Jerusalem.

Ben Cohen, now a sergeant in the Jewish Legion, is recruiting officer in charge. He was a leading figure in organizing a second squad that since has gone away and a third one that will leave soon. He has been assisted in this work by Levin, who also is a sergeant and who has undergone training in Canada. Seligshon and Bashkow are corporals and now are in the training camp. Four others who have gone from here have since become noncommissioned officers.

## Jewish Red Cross.

The spirit of patriotism aroused by the formation of this, the first St. Louis unit of the Jewish Legion, has resulted in the organization of another body of war workers. It is the Jewish Red Cross. It is the Jewish Red Cross. This league now has a membership of 500 and it is growing in membership and financial strength.

As the Jewish Legion work has grown in St. Louis during the last few weeks, so has it grown throughout the nation, and what has been done here and will be done here is but a fair index of the things being done by the great body of Jewish people of the United States. The work has progressed in such measure that it has gained recognition of the Jewish people of the nation and will be taken up in its fullest form by the Convention of Zionists, which will be held at Pittsburgh, Pa., June 27. At this meeting, it is expected, the movement will be given such monstrous moral and financial support that the dream of seeing a division of 20,000 Jews raised in the United States by the last of the year will be realized.

Thus is the movement becoming national and not a mere side branch of the British recruiting work as conducted in the United States. Thus does the movement promise to sweep past the goal set for the United States by the

English Government a few weeks ago when it authorized its recruiting missions here to establish this new branch of its soldier-getting service.

In conformity with plans that were at that time developed by the British Government, Lieut. J. D. Cameron, at the head of the British recruiting office in St. Louis, took up the work. George W. Searjeant of the mission spoke at many meetings and otherwise helped to head the movement. To the Jewish people he brought the word his government had sent. He repeated the words Jewish leaders had voiced in England and in France. He, furthermore, gave Britain's promise that Jews for military service would be sent to fight only in Palestine and with the one view in mind—that of conquering the land and making it a nation for the Jewish people.

And those who have thus far responded to the call from Judah, are not wandering, worthless, ne'er-do-wells. They are responsible and intelligent young men. They are representatives of the best Jewish families. Serg. Levin was president of the Jewish Zionist Organization, which is the Jewish national movement, when he left for the military training camp. Serg. Cohen was a former president of the same body, while Seligshon was secretary. Others were active members of this and other Jewish bodies of St. Louis.

All were in business. Serg. Levin was a member of a wholesale dry goods firm. He arranged his business affairs to become a soldier. Cohen was a traveling salesman in Southern Missouri, Mississippi, Arkansas and Missouri. Corp. Seligshon is a graduate of the St. Louis University and was in charge of the bookkeeping at a large clothing house. Corp. Bashkow, with his brother, Morris, owned and conducted a manufacturing company. They sold out when they heard the call, and both answered it. Morris is with Aaron in the training camp. Many others who have gone have sacrificed business interests at home. They said: "We are ready to give until it hurts, and then give some more."

From France was sent the first Jewish battalion into the fighting zone. There were 5000 young Jews in it, and many had come from Russia, Rumania, Italy and England. Some were French Jews. After its organization a demonstration was made in Paris, where, under the French and Jewish flags, the recruits marched the streets and were reviewed and applauded by thousands of persons. This was the beginning of the first Jewish army that had been formed in centuries.

They went away and they fought as bravely as soldiers ever fought. They fought on the French front and there the most of them died. It was in the first battle of Champagne, in February, 1915, six months after they marched

away from Paris. Among the dead was David Rotstein, Russian born, who had gone to France. He had studied at the Jewish Public University of Paris.

Infamed before his departure, Rotstein's death caused his name to be sounded throughout France. And the echo has reached every corner of the world. For he left a testimony to the French people. With dying lips, he said the words that fired France as it had never before allowed itself to be fired by the prayers of the Jewish people. "Oh, beloved France," he said, "I am dying for you; but happily do I go, believing France will be the first in aid to free the Jewish people and help them to have a national homeland in Palestine."

This made a strong impression upon French opinion, and it was not long until Barres, French writer and at the head of the French Catholics, made a strong appeal in favor of the Jews.

Prior to that time N. Slousch, L. D., noted French Jew, who but a fortnight ago paid St. Louis a visit, had conversed with his old friend, Vladimir Jabotinsky, famous Russian-Jewish journalist and Zionist leader, who had come from England to Paris. Jabotinsky went for the express purpose of conferring with Slousch, professor of literature in the Jewish Public University at Paris. "What is to be done to influence the allies to assist the Zionists to get into Palestine?" they asked each other. Neither was then able to answer the question. But a decision they arrived at in this meeting led to a later answer, which came after the valiant Rotstein had expressed his dying faith in France.

It was in December, 1914, that Slousch and Jabotinsky conferred. Four months before that the Jewish battalion had been organized and its members marched away to die on the battle grounds of Champagne. The decision reached by these two able Jews came from an idea born while Paris watched the 5000 Jewish warriors march away to fight for the French and the allies. "Let us form a Jewish army corps," they said.

## Beginning of the Legion.

From Paris Jabotinsky went to Italy, where he met Pinchus Ruthenberg, a Jewish leader of the Russian revolution. The plan was presented to him and he agreed. Then Jabotinsky was off to Egypt, where there were 5000 Jewish refugees from Palestine. Among them the first recruiting of the Jewish Legion was begun. But only 600 out of the 8000 responded. For that was all there were of that vast number who were physically fit to fight.

This body of 600 Jewish troops was organized and drilled. England came in with assistance and appointed a colonel for the regiment. The name of that man, an Irishman, will forever live and be honored by the Jewish people of

the earth. He was Col. Peterson, leader of that most unusual corps of fighters, the Zion Mule Corps.

It was impossible to send them to Palestine at that time, because there was no fighting there. But they were sent to Gallipoli, where they engaged in battle and about 200 were killed.

A book written by Col. Peterson later—a book now known by Jews of almost every country—had much then to do with further help which came to the Jews from the allies. This book, "With the Zion Mule Corps in Gallipoli," went far in showing to the world, and especially to England, the Jewish fighting spirit and what the hopes of going back to Palestine meant to these people. Peterson urged England to adopt them as units.

In July of 1916 Dr. Slousch received, in Paris, another visit from Jabotinsky, who had returned from Italy.

"I am going to London," said Jabotinsky, "and obtain the sanction of the English Government for the creation of a Jewish national army." And with this he was off. But, with all of the favorable sentiment in England toward giving aid to the Jewish people, Jabotinsky met with many difficulties. In the first place, there was no war in Palestine, it was pointed out, and it was generally feared that such a movement would react against the Jews who already were there. There was danger that they would be slaughtered by the Turks in reprisal. But the arms of the war, god did finally reach Palestine and the time was ripe.

## Held by Bolsheviki.

Dr. Slousch then came to the United States. That was in 1917, and he met the great Russian, Pinchus Ruthenberg. Ruthenberg came to this country in the interest of the Zionist movement, and, with Dr. Slousch, was instrumental in arousing a certain amount of interest. Ruthenberg returned to Russia, where he was arrested by the Bolsheviki and failed and since has been in prison. He was an enemy of the Bolsheviki, being extreme in his views of the cause of the war and in his sympathies with the allies.

Ruthenberg and Slousch made an attempt to organize a Jewish unit in New York, but they were hindered by the same factor that hindered the work in England—the fear that such a movement would cause a massacre of the Jews in Palestine. It was then that Ruthenberg was appointed governor of Petrograd and was called away, only to be captured and placed in prison. Dr. Slousch was left here alone, and, although a strong man in Paris and among his people in all parts of the world, he could accomplish little. But this did not halt his efforts.

The Hebrew-speaking Poale Zion in the fall of last year sent a delegation to Washington in an effort to gain government permission to raise a Jewish

legion in the United States. It was pointed out by Washington that such a course could not be followed for the reason that the United States was not at war with Turkey and could not give official permission for an American Jewish unit.

Then was formed the first Jewish army commission in the United States. It comprised leading Jews—Ruin Brainin, a friend of Dr. Slousch, and Dr. N. Sirkin, Dr. Slobodin, Dr. Zhitkovsky and Dr. Slousch. Writing to Jabotinsky, they said: "We are ready to organize at least 2000 young Jewish men of the United States into fighting units if England will recognize the national character of the unit, and if it will promise to send such a unit only to Palestine." No answer came for a month. Then England began the campaign in Palestine and the right the Jewish people had asked for was granted.

## First Jewish Army.

England forthwith made a public declaration which set Jewish hearts all over the globe aflame with zeal and fighting spirit. Soon Jabotinsky wrote that the Jewish National Unit in England had been recognized by that government as the first Jewish Army. It was ordered by the government that commands be given in Hebrew, that the fighters wear Hebrew insignia, that they be sent only to Palestine to fight.

Actual work of recruiting was started in America. The first unit was sent from New York in March. There were 500 in this unit. They are now in Palestine and will soon be fighting. Five other units have left New York since March, as well as has many units from other cities and sections of the country, including those from St. Louis. Two English Jewish battalions have been sent from London and are now fighting. Contingents have gone from France. Baron James de Rothschild, member of the great family of Rothschild, who was a captain in the French Army, was transferred to the Jewish Legion and since has met death in fighting against the Turks in Palestine.

The Canadian Parliament several months ago issued an order that the Jews of Canada who join for military service shall be forwarded only for Palestine service when so desired. About 5000 have already joined, some of whom have already gone across.

France has sent an army of 4000 to Palestine and they are fighting. Dr. Slousch was the mediator between the French and the American Jews and the work that has been done in this regard has resulted in France announcing readiness to renounce its control in Palestine. It was following this movement the National Unit was formed there.

So it is that Jews from the corners of the earth are gathering together and are training as soldiers. The Jews have again become a nation.

JAFFA FROM THE SEA



SERG. ABRAHAM LEVIN, WHO HELPED ORGANIZE FIRST ST. LOUIS COMPANY OF JEWISH BATTALION.